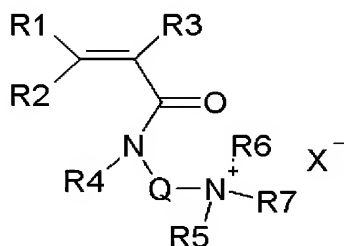


In the Claims:

Kindly rewrite the claims to read as follows:

1. (Currently amended) An associative amphoteric polymer characterised in ~~that it presents~~ having a molecular weight greater than 50,000 g/mol ~~and in that it contains~~ comprising:

- at least one acrylamide-derived cationic monomer containing a hydrophobic chain and with the general formula:



where

R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, independently, a hydrogen or an alkyl chain containing 1 to 4 carbons

Q: an alkyl chain containing 1 to 8 carbons

R7: an alkyl or arylalkyl chain containing 8 to 30 carbons, ~~preferably 8 to 20 carbons~~

X: ~~a halide selected from the group including bromide, chloride, iodide, fluoride and~~ a counterion with a negative charge[.]

- between 1 and 99.9 mole % of at least one anionic monomer presenting acrylic, vinyl, maleic, fumaric or allyl functionalities and containing a carboxy, phosphonate or sulfonate group and/or their ammonium salts or alkaline-earth metal salts or alkali metal salts
- and between 1 and 99 mole % of at least one non-ionic hydrosoluble monomer.

2. (Currently amended) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in claim 1 characterised in that wherein the anionic monomer is selected from the

group ~~including consisting of~~ acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, itaconic acid, crotonic acid, maleic acid, fumaric acid, 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropane sulfonic acid, vinylsulfonic acid, vinylphosphonic acid, allylsulfonic acid, allylphosphonic acid and/or their water-soluble salts of an alkali metal, alkaline-earth metal and ammonium.

3. (Currently amended) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in ~~either claim 1 or 2 characterised in that wherein~~ the non-ionic hydrosoluble monomer is ~~selected from the group including comprises a~~ water-soluble vinyl monomers, which are advantageously selected from the group ~~including consisting of~~ acrylamide and methacrylamide, N-isopropylacrylamide, N-N-dimethylacrylamide, and N-methylolacrylamide[[.]], N-vinylformamide, N-vinyl acetamide, N-vinylpyridine and/or N-vinylpyrrolidone ~~can also be used.~~

4. (Currently amended) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in ~~any of claims claim 1 to 3 characterised in that wherein~~ said polymer is branched and/or cross-linked and additionally comprises ~~using~~ a branching and/or cross-linking agent.

5. (Currently amended) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in ~~claim 4 characterised in that wherein~~ the branching and/or cross-linking agent is selected from the group ~~including consisting of~~ N-methylol acrylamide, methylene bis acrylamide, allyl ethers of sucrose, diacrylates, divinyls, diallylated compounds, such as methyl triallyl ammonium chloride, triallylamine, tetraallyl ammonium chloride, tetra allyl oxyethane and tetra allyl ethylene diamine.

6. (Currently amended) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in ~~any of claims claim 1 to 5 characterised in that it comes in~~ dry, powder or granulate form.

7. (Currently amended) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in ~~any of claims claim 1 to 6~~ characterised in that ~~it contains~~comprising:

- between 0.005 and 10 mole % of a hydrophobic cationic monomer, preferably ~~between 0.01 and 5 mole % and preferably between 0.02 and 2 mole %~~
- between 5 and 90 mole % of an acidic component comprising one or more of: acrylic acid, ~~and/or~~ methacrylic acid ~~and/or~~ 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropane sulfonic acid and their salts, ~~preferably between 10 and 60 mole % preferably between 10 and 50 mole %~~
- and between 5 and 90 mole % of at least one amide chosen from the group consisting of acrylamide, ~~and/or~~ methacrylamide, ~~and/or~~ N-isopropylacrylamide, ~~and/or~~ N-N-dimethylacrylamide, ~~and/or~~ N-vinylformamide, ~~and/or~~ N-vinyl acetamide ~~and/or~~ N-vinylpyrrolidone, preferably between 35 and 90 mole % and preferably between 48 and 90 mole %.

8. (Currently amended) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in ~~any of claims claim 1 to 7~~ characterised in that wherein the acrylamide-derived hydrophobic cationic monomer is selected from the group ~~including~~ consisting of N-acrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-dodecyl ammonium chloride, N-methacrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-dodecyl ammonium chloride, N-acrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-dodecyl ammonium bromide, N-methacrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-dodecyl ammonium bromide, N-acrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-octadecyl ammonium chloride, N-methacrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-octadecyl ammonium chloride, N-acrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-octadecyl ammonium bromide and N-methacrylamidopropyl-N, N-dimethyl-N-octadecyl ammonium bromide.

9. (Currently amended) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in ~~any of claims claim 1 to 8~~ characterised in that ~~it also contains~~ further comprising at least one other monomer, whether ionic or not, hydrosoluble or not, accounting

for less than 20 mole % and selected from the group ~~including consisting of~~ monomers ~~such as of~~ dialkylaminoalkyl (meth)acrylate, dialkylaminoalkyl (meth)acrylamide, diallylamine, methyldiallylamine and their quaternary ammonium salts or acid salts, etc., acrylamide derivatives, ~~such as N-alkylacrylamides, notably N-tert-butylacrylamide, octylacrylamide as well as N,N-dialkylacrylamides notably N,N-dihexylacrylamide, etc.,~~ derivatives of acrylic acid, ~~such as~~ hydroxyalkyl acrylates and methacrylates, allyl derivatives, styrene and acrylate esters containing ethoxylated chains and acrylate esters ~~or~~ not terminating with an alkyl or arylalkyl chain.

10. (Currently amended) An associative amphoteric polymer as claimed in ~~any of claims claim 1 to 9~~ characterised in that it has having a molecular weight greater than 100,000 g/mol ~~and preferably greater than 200,000 g/mol.~~

11. (Currently amended) An aqueous composition containing as a thickening agent at least one polymer as claimed in ~~any of claims claim 1 to 10.~~

12. (Currently amended) Use of associative polymers as claimed in ~~any of claims claim 1 to 10,~~ branched and/or cross-linked or not, as well as the gels containing ~~them said associative polymers~~ in the oil, paper, water treatment, mining, cosmetics, textile or detergent industries.

13. (New) The associative amphoteric polymer of claim 1, wherein R7 is an alkyl or arylalkyl chain containing 8 to 20 carbons.

14. (New) The associative amphoteric polymer of claim 1 wherein X is a halide selected from the group consisting of bromide, chloride, iodide and fluoride.

15. (New) The associative amphoretic polymer of claim 7, comprising:  
(a) between 0.01 and 5 mole % of ~~the~~ hydrophobic cationic monomer,

(b) between 10 and 60 mole % of an acidic component comprising one or more of: acrylic acid, methacrylic acid and 2-acrylamido-2-methylpropane sulfonic acid and their salts, and

(c) between 35 and 90 mole % of at least one amide chosen from the group consisting of acrylamide, methacrylamide, N-isopropylacrylamide, N-N-dimethylacrylamide, N-vinylformamide, N-vinyl acetamide and N-vinylpyrrolidone.

16. (New) The associative amphoteric polymer of claim 15, comprising:

(a) between 0.02 and 2 mole % of the hydrophobic cationic monomer,

(b) between 10 and 50 mole % of said acidic component and

(c) between 48 and 90 mole % of said amide.

17. (New) The associative amphoteric polymer of claim 10 having a molecular weight greater than 200,000 g/mol.